Carl S. Swisher Library
Main
PS3537.T716 S4 1916
Stork, Charles Whar/Sea and bay : a poem
3 1951 00172 2088

SEA AND BAY

By

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

LIBRARY
JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY

Gift
Mrs. Lewis Piaget Shanks

SEA AND BAY

SEA AND BAY

A POEM OF NEW ENGLAND

BY

CHARLES WHARTON STORK

AUTHOR OF
"DAY DREAMS OF GREECE"
AND
"THE QUEEN OF ORPLEDE"

NEW YORK
JOHN LANE COMPANY
MCMXVI

PS3537
.T716S4
1916

Copyright, 1916,
By John Lane Company

JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Press of
J. J. Little & Ives Company
New York, U. S. A.

70993

TO

PAUL DOUGHERTY

PAINTER OF THE SEA

Contents

		PAGE
PART I.	BAY	11
PART II.	SEA	63
PART III.	BAY AND SEA	125

PART I

BAY

Bay Song

Trustful, dimpling, blue-eyed bay,
Glad at rest and glad at play,
Like a babe beneath the eye
Of thy virgin-mother sky,
Whose bright ecstasy of love
Makes thee smile to her above,
Scarce a shadow born of earth
Dims thy soul of heavenly birth.

Little winds thy curls caress,
And sometimes for wantonness
Thou dost lightly pout and frown,
Tossing fretful up and down,
Till it might seem thy tender form
Felt forebodings of the storm.
But soon thy fears are put to rout
And winsome laughter dances out.

Careless we beside thee born
Share the sparkle of the morn.

Soon away to regions far
We must follow each his star.
Yet, the day of tempest done,
Sailing back at set of sun,
We may hope once more to be
Happy, trustful, calm, like thee.

My father died before I recollect.
The thing I first recall was how at dawn
The pigeons would be cooing in the eaves;
So that, when Mother told me solemnly
Of Father's death and how he had gone away
Up high, I thought of where the pigeons cooed
And fluttered—that was my idea of heaven.
Our family name was Carr, well thought of there;
Our house was in a pine grove near the shore,
Some distance up the bay above the town,
Plain as a box, but cosy and neat within,—

All but the parlor, chill with musty gloom,
Where gay stuffed birds and foreign shells
kept state.
Three children we were in all; my sister
Jane,
Alden (that's my name), and my brother
Phil,
Born after Father's death as I know now.
Mother did well by us, as the saying is,
Though more by stress of conscience than
of love;
Managed the old farm, never let us want,
And taught us all at home till school-time
came.

How clearly the scene stands out: the
whitewashed walls
With map and blackboard, cut by windows
high
And staring; in the midst the teacher's
face,
Kind but remote because of spectacles.
Little she was—though very large to
me—

Her voice high-pitched and chirping like
a bird's;
Her small bright eyes were bird-like too.
She spoke
With Mother first, then turned to me and
said,
"I hope you'll like it here." I hoped so
too.
Next I turned round to look at all the
rest—
Some watching me, some busy at their
slates,
Some whispering. Sister Jane was one
of them,
I couldn't tell just where in such a crowd.
But soon the teacher led me to my seat
And gave me a slate with easy sums to
do.—
Few days come back like one's first day at
school!

Lessons went smoothly, but the other
boys
Were rough and teased me; if Jane took
my part

It only made things worse, until I learned
That boys—like men—must fight their way alone.
I made no friends; as soon as school was done
I used to trudge off gravely by myself
To lord it in the kingdom of my choice;
A pebbly beach, walled in on every side
By scarred gray cliffs that shut the world of school
And farm completely out, yet left me free
To share the gladness of the romping waves,
And steep my being in the soft warm air.
Such happiness there was mine, I truly think,
As few if any of my schoolmates found
In livelier, noisier games. When I began
To read I somehow took to naval fights,
Which filled my mind and colored all my play
With patriotic zeal. From that time forth

I dreamed a world of men outside my own.
Instead of merely throwing stones I now
Repelled invasions of the British fleet,
Sinking glass-bottle frigates by the score,—
The bay was sea for me in miniature.

You may imagine that the cares of life
Broke in upon me often: chores to do,
Letters to carry, cows and pigs to feed,
So that for days I hardly saw my beach.
Yet all that lives in me of those early years
Is Mother's face, Jane's calm approving smile,
And the remembrance of my beach: the cliffs,
The wild sweet-peas, the round wet pebbles even.
Surely my life between, however marred,
Was better for those memories of the beach.
The bay, so silken smooth, so mildly bright

It seemed the very mirror of repose,
Lent me tranquillity, the pure white clouds
Touched the divine in me with high desire,
The flowers and pebbles pleased my homelier moods,
And taught a childlike love of little things.
In some such way I grew till I was twelve.

On my next birthday, as the weather was fair,
The month July, my Uncle Alden came
To take me for a picnic to the sea.
I was his favorite, being named for him,
And had the benefit of his kindest thoughts
And longest yarns; for he was a travelled man,
A merchant captain in his time, and now,
Though long retired, he held in high contempt
The manners of his neighbors by the bay.
That morning he wheeled up before the door,

Cried "All aboard!" gave me a steady hand,
And helped me to a seat. Who then so proud
As I to hold the reins and flick the whip?
While we were spinning down the sandy road,
He spoke as one inspired: "And so, young chap,
You've never seen the ocean. Well, that beats
The very blazes! Lived to twelve year old
Within five miles. Call that a life, do ye then?
Seen it between the capes, ye say? No doubt,
Looking at heaven through a window-chink!
I wonder what ye'll make of it to-day
With the warm sunlight striking on the rocks
And a sou'wester beating up the surf."

BAY

We climbed a burly headland, coming
out
By a lighthouse, and I looked; but what
I saw
I had no words to tell, nor have I now.
For when those Atlas arms of swimming
blue
Reached out as if to bring heaven down
to me,
I knew myself akin to that wide scene
By the great throb with which I leaped to
it there
And caught it to my spirit. What I felt
I can but hint by some vague reference
To other feelings known in later life.
I've met with lovely women, two or three,
Who open vistas to the wondering soul
Of spirit realms unguessed, with whom it
seems
That earth and heaven have no fast-set
bound,
But flow together as imperceptibly
As blue to blue on the horizon's verge,
Where ships float up to meet the bending
sky.

It wasn't long before I had earned a boat
By extra work in the hayfields. I could now
Fish and explore the bay to heart's content.
I might have taken Phil along, but he
Would rather learn to do things on the farm
Than wait for bites or play at make-believe.
For me, though, fishing was romance, a world
Half apprehended in those magic depths
As in enchanted woods. No water-sprite,
Undine or Triton could have seemed more strange
Than those wild beings that bit and tugged and splashed
Until they were safely landed in the boat,—
Only the frying-pan could prove them fish.
I leaned above the line, intent as one

Who takes a message from another world
Sent in a code of pulls. I could but guess
Their meaning: one said "Wait!" another
"Jerk!"
Some of the fish were clever, some were
dull,
Each had his character: the bluefish fierce
Pulling from side to side with frantic
strength;
The cunning flounder swimming with the
line,
Till at the boat's side standing on his tail
He threw the hook and vanished, white
side up.
Many were beautiful: the round scup-
paug,
Their sides aglint with iridescent hues,
Which shone like big new dollars in the
rays
Of sunset, when they always bite the best;
The blackfish stout, of blunt aggressive
build,
Black, grey or yellow with stripes.—You
wonder why
So many artists love to paint dead fish.

But painted fish don't smell, and kindly note
The firm rich color and the subtle sheen
On every scale!—Well, well, I've skipped a bit
From those young days of fishing to a time
When I saw famous pictures, but you see
The threads of life get tangled now and then.

But whether I fished or drifted with the tide
I was at one with Nature. Oft at noon
Of some bright, listless day I let my gaze
Dream down into the depths of emerald
Beneath, or with a slanting look beheld
The waveless wide expanse, till soul and sense
Would blend into the mid-day light which dwelt
Caressingly on all. Thus not so much
Did Nature's beauty come to me, as I
Went out to Nature.

I was taught of God
In a cold, gloomy building, but His love—
What I could learn of it—was revealed
to me
In the warm air beneath the tender sky;
Things I had heard in church would then
revive,
As Nature gave them breath and life and
truth.
I liked to hear that Jesus taught men so
Beside the lake or on the mountain side
In haunts of daily life where flowers and
trees
Offered themselves for parables, in fields
Or by the village well. How easily then
In dull folk's hearts might spring the
seed of faith
Or flow the living water!
Kindlier thoughts
Drew me at length to leave my hermit
ways
And mingle with my fellows. First of all
A girl named Hilda won my bashful trust
By a bold act of sympathy. The boys,

For reasons known to them, had picked me out
To be their target in a snowball game.
One well-directed volley knocked me down
With bleeding nose and lips. The marksmen brave,
Scared when they found I lay there partly stunned,
Were standing sheepishly aloof. Just then
Hilda came up and saw us. Like a flash
She ran between, and turning on the boys:
"You great big cowards, all of you on one!"
Shamed even the roughest. Wiping off the blood
With that incipient mother-gentleness
Which girls fall heir to in their early teens,
She sent the leader of the bullying crew
For water,—this I heard as though from far.
A moistened handkerchief on brow and cheek
Revived me, Hilda helped me to sit up,

And making sure no serious harm was done,
Soon got me to my feet and so to school.
Few women leave a generous deed half done,
And Hilda was a woman from the first.
Finding I was an outlaw from the rest,
She tried to learn the cause, asked of my life
And told me of her own. How joyfully
My heart, so long unsunned by fellowship,
Melted, to tears at first, and then to speech
Of all my lonely fancies, lofty hopes
And boy ambitions!
From that winter morn
Hilda and I were friends. I took her down
To see my beach and told her wondrous tales
Of wild adventures;—not that she took in
Half my odd notions, but she looked at me
With such grave interest that I rambled on

Complacently enough. In course of time
Her quiet influence wrought upon me so
That I no longer found myself shut out
From common schoolboy games. I took my place
On ball-team, coasting party, husking bee,—
Whatever sport the season might suggest.
I still was laughed at, but my offish ways
Received more tolerance. There were rumors, too,
That I was "something extra" at my books.
Mother tried hard to fix me to the farm,
Showed how to run it, scolded, begged and cried,
Or strove to rouse a rivalry with Phil,
Already my superior; nothing worked.
I did as I was told, went blindly on
Till I could hardly stagger, but no spark
Of love for what I did inspired my toil.
The fields were clods, the cattle stupid beasts;
They roused my imagination to no life

As they did Phil's. But set me at my books,—
My history, Latin, mathematics even—
And straight my mind awoke. The very figures
Were things I loved to wrestle with; they seemed
Somehow more real than pigs or ricks of hay.
If Mother argued, I could never explain
Why I should feel so. Uncle Alden laughed
When Mother told him. "I was right, you'll see,"
He used to say. Once the head master called,
To talk of me, I knew. The upshot was
That I was given two more years of school
Beyond what most had; Uncle paid for it.
Then I was happy, did my farming chores
With zeal to earn my schooling honestly,
And showed a cheerful visage to the world.

The world accordingly smiled back at me
And life went smoothly.
Somewhere near fifteen
The romance of my beach began to fade,
My reading changed from fights to poetry
And sentimental tales, my peace of mind
Gave way to restless languor. It was long
Before I learned the cause, though in the end
It struck me like a blow. One night that year
I went with Hilda, as the custom was,
To a birthday party at a village house.
There, after hide-and-seek and blind-man's-buff,
They called for Copenhagen (kiss-in-the-ring).
The game being new to me, I joined the rest
And watched, but when one struggling girl was kissed,
Then others, many of them nothing loath,
A cruel wormwood feeling of disgust

Rose in my throat, a disillusionment
That now may well seem comic: This
was love,
The knightly passion for a peerless maid
Of which the novels told! I thanked my
stars
That Hilda had escaped the general
fate.
One bold-cheeked hoyden caught me with
the ring
And stood an instant, but I stared and
blushed
Till with a mocking laugh she slipped
away.
And yet while walking home I felt again
That I had played the fool and missed my
chance.
Later, on moonlight picnics when I found
A couple kissing, I would steal away
With lonely hard sensations in my heart,
Because their happiness was not for me.
There was a song we often used to sing
On straw-rides or around a driftwood
fire
That used to vex me. This is how it went:

The Husking Bee

Ridin' home from the huskin' bee
'Neath the full moon's tender light,
My sweetheart Sally was a-settin' by me
An' her eyes they was big and bright.
Then I thought to myself: I'd like to know
If my arm stole around her waist,
Whether she'd cuddle close an' look up so,
An' her lips I then would taste.

CHORUS

We was joggin' along, joggin' along,
Joggin' along by the moon's pale light;
Joggin' along, singin' a song,
Comin' home from the huskin' bee.

Pretty soon my hand it crept around,
An' Sally looked up so shy,
An' two pair o' lips each other found,—
Oh, what a happy man was I!
Then I says to her, "Sal, I felt so scared
That you'd scream or say me nay."
But she answered, "I was waitin' to see if
you dared,
For a girl must be won that way."

BAY

Chorus

We was joggin' along, joggin' along,
Joggin' along by the moon's soft light;
While our two hearts sang love's own song,
Comin' home from the huskin' bee.

Now if you should be placed as I was then,
Just listen to my advice,
The girls they take to the forward men
If they only act polite an' nice.
Perhaps you will think that the maid is coy
An' be afraid to begin,
While she's just a-thinkin': This noodle-head boy
Hain't got enough spunk to win.

Chorus

So when you're—
Joggin' along, joggin' along,
Joggin' along by the moon's soft light,
Joggin' along, remember my song
As you come from the huskin' bee.

I couldn't ever be a "forward man"
Or boy, despite the moral of the piece.
I followed Hilda with a spaniel love
Month after month, but when at last I tried
One mild May night to do as in the song,
She just said, "Alden Carr, behave yourself!"
And Alden Carr behaved.
Thus far in life
I'd met with no one from the outside world,
But this year in the summer holidays
A painter came to board with us. Just how
He knew the bay, and why he chose our house
I don't remember, but he picked me out
To carry his things for him. When Mother fumed
Because I left my farming, my new friend
Insisted, giving reason for his whim
And paying me a grown man's wage besides.
"I can't paint pictures when a stupid boor

Is glowering at me," he would often say.
"I must have some one there with eyes
in his head
To tell me if my work looks right. A boy
Who has lived outdoors in such a place as
this
Should beat the soundest critic in the
world,
If only he can get my point of view."
This was the way he used to start with
me:
He'd fill his canvas in with general tones
In large bold masses, make me turn my
head
Sideways, and ask me if they matched the
real.
It took some time before I came to see
Just what he wanted. "So you didn't
know
That hill was blue," he said the first day
out;
"Thought it was green because the grass
was green.
But look now, only lean your head and
look—

It's blue, you see. We let our foolish minds
Obscure our eyes. No matter what you think,
If you think wrong. Start fresh and get the facts—
That puts men right in life as well as art."
So after a while I got to know his ways
And fit myself to suit them.—Short he was,
Dapper and stoutish, rather old than young,
And therefore set in his manner. At the core
Dead earnest, but as playful on the top
As any truant schoolboy. None the less
He kept you where he wanted you. His name
Was Atwood Brinton.
By the second week
We two were like old comrades, for he talked
Between the bursts of painting, and his speech
Had all the life and color of his brush.

Longing to question him, I quickly found
That if I chose my time it rather pleased
Than irked him. When he measuredly pronounced
His first large picture finished, I inquired
If those grey blurs were trees, those brown ones cows,
And why he didn't make them look more real.
"Look, youngster, look! You think you see a cow
Because your mind tells you it *is* a cow,
And, knowing what cows look like from near by,
You force the details into what you see
From far. But shut your meddling mind and look.
You don't see horns and shoulder, ribs and tail;
You see a brown spot. Well, and there you are!"
Then his enthusiasm for art and life
Were still so fresh. I thought I had posed him once,

When he'd been saying Nature was so grand
That even the greatest painter couldn't hope
To put the whole on canvas, I inquired
If photographs weren't better than his art,
Since they put all in. "Put in all of what?
Why, all the trees and clouds and waves, you say.
But does that give you Nature? No, no more
Than the town census gives you breathing men.
Dry facts aren't Nature; Nature is a thrill,
A bounding in the blood. Leave out man's heart
And there *is* no Nature, only stocks and stones.
Nature is just the wide deep soul of things
That speaks to all of us, giving each no more
Than he can comprehend. Those men who paint

Just rocks and trees do worse than photographs,
But he who paints the harmony and joy
Which Nature's voice awakens in his soul
Brings, poet-like, new beauty down to earth.
As no man's soul is big enough to grasp
The whole of Nature, so in some degree
The greatest painters fail.—Why, bless the boy!
His brow's as wrinkled as a millionaire's,
His eyes are bulging and his mouth agape.
Don't try to gulp all Emerson at once,
Sonny, but give me a hand here with my traps
Or else we shan't be home by supper time."

He made the commonest things seem wonderful,
And let a flood of feeling and ideas
Pour in upon my mind. When he found out
That I was quick at books, he lent me his,

Especially poetry, and best of all
His voice evoked the living music hid
In each harmonious cadence. By his aid
I saw the host of rebel angels whelmed
In gulfs of quenchless fire. His sympathy
Revealed the limpid depth of Wordsworth's mind.
I saw prismatic hues of Shelleian joy,
And drank delicious nectar draughts of Keats.
"Poems and music teach men how to paint,
And pictures how to write," he often said.
Two things perplexed me in my newfound friend:
First, why with all the world from which to choose
He came to summer by our barren shore;
And why with all his passionate delight
In poetry he wrote none for himself.
One rainy day, though, he replied to both
These points by handing me a scribbled sheet:

A Painter in New England

Did you ever note the beauty of the soft
New England grasses,
All the ochres, reds and browns?
And the flowers: the purple asters and the
goldenrod's rich masses,
With the cardinals' flaming gowns,
Dots of blood against the tangle of the
reedy, lone morasses,
Where the nodding cat-tails rustle under
every wind that passes.
Ah! what reticent depth of color,
Growing brighter, growing duller,
As a smile of sunlight broadens or a brow
of storm-cloud frowns!

Have you read the blazoned glory of the
sunset's revelations,
Glowing scarlet streaked with gold;
Have you seen the sky-towers crumbling
in stupendous conflagrations,
Passing gorgeous to behold?
While the east is hung with tapestries in
dove-serene gradations,

And the naked vault of heaven is filled
with rosy undulations?
Where in all the world resplendent
Or the poet's mind transcendent
Can such miracles be rivaled, form so
grand or hue so bold?

Have you watched the dreamy progress
of a gray New England schooner
Drifting seaward with the tide
Darkly down a lane of radiance, dawn-lit
gold or silvery lunar,
Ribbon narrow or ocean wide?
Such a boat in such a background I will
paint you ten times sooner
Than a lily-perfect yacht with drooping
topsail and ballooner.
No, for me the old-time vessel
In a land-locked bay to nestle
Till the light wind flaps her staysail and
the light wave laps her side.

Have you shrunk before the grimness of
the rugged longshore ledges
Where the groundswell surf rolls in

Round the battlemented coastline with its
walls and bastion wedges?
Hark! the cave-resounded din,
As a breaker smites the granite with the
strength of giant sledges,
And a swaying fringe of foam enfolds the
rampart's dripping edges.
Lovely lands across the ocean
Thrill the heart with quick emotion,
But the shore of staid New England holds
a rapture hard to win.

These lines of Brinton's gave the common
sights
Of every day an unfamiliar tone.
It filled me with delight, almost with awe
To find the quiet district where I lived
So full of inspiration. When I tried
To master this, the painter mused a while
Before he spoke. "Yes, boy, no land I've
seen
Can speak to me as this does. Just the
same
I'm not surprised that you're surprised at
me.

It's only after you've enriched your eyes
With years of travel that you get to know
The things you used to look at as a boy.
You've got to live and spread. It's not
the eyes
At all I really mean, it takes the soul
To see the only things worth looking at.
Go out and live first, then come back and
see."
I told him I was poor. "Don't stop for
that,"
He urged me; "seize your chance and get
away,—
It don't much matter where, but get be-
yond
Your bay and see yourself with other
eyes."

Our conversations used to make me feel
Half proud and half abashed that such a
man
Should waste his genius on a country boy.
At last the day before he was to leave
I hinted this. He laid a kindly hand

Across my shoulder, looked me in the eyes,
And with a gentler and more personal tone
Than he had ever used, he said, "Young chap,
I'm fond of you. There's something in your look
That tells me you're worth while. I like to talk,
That's true enough—it lets my pressure down
And clears me of cobwebs—but I'm not the man
To speak about the things I care for most
With every one. I noticed from the start
How quickly you caught on, how keen you were
To wrestle with new problems; and I've watched
Your face light up with glowing earnestness
When finer thoughts evoked your finer self.

Then I found out the pace you set at school,
And let you have your head. The way you ran
To what was best in Nature and in books
Made me feel doubly certain I was right
In what I thought before. Lad, don't forget
You've got the aptitude for better things
Than farming. See you get away from here.
If lack of money keeps you, write to me.
Another thing. Last Sunday afternoon
I saw you with a girl." (Hilda it was,
With whom I went much less when Brinton came.)
"Don't blush, I compliment you on your taste;
She seemed a very queen of curds and cream,
As Shakespeare says. Now lots of silly chaps
Find sweethearts long before they find a trade.

Don't you do that. Go out and make your way
Before you ask her. Maybe she's the girl
Of girls for you, but look around a bit
And you'll not choose the worse."
The following day
I drove my patron to the train; we said
Good-bye, and he was hurried from my sight.
But even had we never met again,
I could not show with any words of mine
The influence which his summer visit had
On all my later life.
The next year passed
In life monotonous as the quiet bay,
Rippled by crispy wavelets of events,
Till like a swift, appalling tidal-wave
Came tragedy. One Sunday late in June
A friend of mine had taken his sweetheart out
To sail, and I was watching from the shore.
The breeze died down, the lifeless atmosphere

Was sultry and oppressive. Soon I saw
That in the north dark clouds were piling up,—
A squall for sure. The boat was two miles out
But near an island; safe enough, I thought.
The clouds flew quickly like a thronging troop
Of genii that one reads of in the tales,
Black and malignant, while a coppery light
Glowed underneath. Across the water spread
A shadow like an inkstain, flecked with white.
It neared the boat. 'Twas time my friend dropped sail
And pulled to the island. Then—what can he mean?
Surely he won't—but yes, he comes about,
Misjudging or in pure foolhardiness,
To run full sail before the driving gust.
Ah, well, perhaps he'll make it. The first puff

He weathers, edging carefully across
Till opposite the beach where, terror-fixed,
I follow every plunge. He nears the shore.
Already I can see the girl's white face
And his neck-muscles, tense and resolute,
When with a merciless push the brutal storm
Crushes the struggling sail against the waves.
My will flames up. I launch my heavy skiff
With desperate strength to meet the sudden need,
Shoving her through the breakers, jumping in,
And tugging at the oars. Not fifty yards
Away they're clinging to the upturned keel
That wallows deep, death-cradled in the trough
Between the foaming crests. I battle on
And try to think.—I've got to get them in

Before they pass the point. No easy job
To keep from swamping in a sea like this.—
There! Dead ahead! I mustn't run them down.
Good boy! He's got her fast. No time to lose.
Now up alongside, ship oars and drag her in!
I have her shoulders. Quick! before this wave—
Thank God! she tumbles somehow into the boat.
Now him.—That breaker threw us far apart.—
Where is he? There's the slippery keel, but where
Is he?—I stand and stare across the gulfs.—
No form, no cry to show me where to turn.
No time to weigh the horror. Back to shore!
Or lose her too.

Well, that was all. I've heard
That drowning men come up before they sink;
It was not so with him, I never saw
His living face again.—It all came back
Just now as if I lived it while I spoke,
And yet 'twas forty years since.—Oh, the girl!
She's now a grandmother, very handsome still
They say.—But to come back to where I was.
Mother, when they had got me to the house,
Began to scold as if I'd just been caught
In mischief: "Mercy me! He'll get his death
Of cold. Soaked through, and in his Sunday clothes!"
Her care soon brought me round, and people said
That she was proud of me; but she never let
Me see it. All she said was, "Let this be
A warning to you." How I couldn't guess,

Till when I was well at last she spoke it
out.
"Promise me, Alden, that you'll never go
To sea. No good will ever come of it,
And I should never spend a quiet night
Thinking you might be took like Edward
Coles."
"But, Mother, that was on the *bay*."
"What then?
Wouldn't the sea be twenty times as bad?"
Perhaps she was right; to me she only
proved
The very opposite of what she wished.
Poor Edward's fate was terrible, but then
I thought that, if a man might drown at
home,
He had better far strike out into the world
And so get something for his risk. The
farm
Grew daily more distasteful. I would
roam
More often on the cliffs to watch the surf,
The dithyrambic rapture of the sea.
My wanderlust was fed by all I saw

And all I read. A book of Shakespeare's plays
Which Mr. Brinton sent me stirred my soul
With passion for adventure: noble deeds,
Chivalric love, the conduct of affairs,
The bold plots of ambitious villainy
So humanly portrayed, all nursed in me
The spirit of unrest, of discontent
With mean surroundings.—Often at the quay
I'd wait to watch the dingy mackerel boats
Bail out their slippery load of shining fish,
And hear the old salts tell of deep-sea work,
Of halibut that weighed three hundred pounds
And fabulous hauls of cod. While I was there
One evening, Uncle slapped me on the back.
"How'd you enjoy to try the Banks?" he asked.

I must have looked my answer, for he said,
"We'll think it over, boy," and strolled away.
I worked my best at school with vague ideas
That this would somehow help, and when I had time,
I sought the cliffs and shared the ocean's mood:
Its huge reproach of craven languidness,
Its sting to manly enterprise, its voice
Of elemental strength; and many a night
My heart would throb as if the keen salt tide
Was poured into my veins. No more for me
The torpid reaches of the mawkish bay!

One thing alone restrained me. It was not
Mother (nor yet the farm, which Phil could take)
Nor Jane, whose counsel I no longer sought,

Though least of all would she have held
me back.
No, it was Hilda; for a time eclipsed
By last year's visitor, but shining now
With the more radiance.—I was just
eighteen,
Finished with school, and galled past
words to tell
By toil that bent and dulled and brutalized
All that was best of me. In one more
year
The blisters would be callous to the yoke
And I a broken drudge; the time had
come
When I should make my choice of sea and
bay.
Hilda was of the bay, no longer now
A sturdy school-girl, but a maid full-
grown,
Slender and tall and shy, yet kind to me;
Face almost classic, hair a thrush-like
brown,
Blue eyes that shone with calm nobility,
And voice clear treble (though 'twould
break sometimes

Beneath the stress of Hilda's earnest thought).
A native grace she had in homeliest things,
And people loved her. No one else could charm
The gloomy bitterness of Mother's moods,
Or rouse in Phil the shame of awkwardness;
And she was Jane's best friend.
One Sunday morn
Uncle came round to tell me of a berth
On a Newfoundland fishing-boat to sail
Next Wednesday for the Banks. That afternoon—
No storm had dared to frown on such a day—
Hilda and I went rowing. Just before
I had felt myself above the rural swarm,
With my great prospects come to me so soon.
But there alone with Hilda all my pride
Grew meek, my self-conceit was overawed;
She was so simple yet so wonderful.

The charm of all my boyhood memories
Was clustered round her: that serene ex-
panse
Of shining beauty blest with azure light,
The nestling islands, and the curving
shore
(Delicious as the line of Hilda's throat)
Were consecrated visibly; and she,
This maiden seated in my clumsy skiff,
Was grown the living presence of the
whole.
As I have seen the sunset-glow pour down
A dim cathedral nave, and dreamed the
saint
Was floating in the radiance, so her form
(Though plainly clad as suited with the
scene)
Was shrined ethereal in the misty beams
That flooded through a rift of western
cloud.
Nor did her aureole vanish when the skiff
Crunched on the pebbles of the lonely isle
Which we had planned to visit. Out she
stepped;

We climbed the bank and strolled until we found
A plot of greensward where the fading lights
Play trixy through the trees. There we sat down
And talked of my career. She asked to know
If it were true I thought to go to sea.
I told her yes, I had no calling here,
That life was cramped within the narrow bay
And that the ocean was the sole escape.
"Your mother, Alden, will she let you go?"
"It's not a case of letting. I can't stay
And stifle here."
"How can you speak like that?
Your folks have always lived here happily,
Your friends are here. Why should you go away
From every one that cares for you. The sea's

So wild and fierce. Father don't set much
store
By sailors, calls them all a shiftless set
That lead an ugly life. I know you're not
A rough boy, Alden. Is there nothing
here
To keep you?"
Then the crucial conflict came.
The bay shone forth so fair in Hilda's
eyes
That the rude sea shrank backward for
a time,
And I could have promised never to de-
part
Had I but dared to take her slim brown
hand.
But no. The tumult of the restless deep
Swelled up and burst in bitter, angry
words:
"To keep me here? No, what should keep
me here?
Poor Mother frets, most people think me
proud,
And Jane, the one of all who understands,
Says go.—Hilda, I want to be a man

And not a fence-pole rotting in the earth.
No one gets on here, it's a stagnant pool;
As if there were no larger way of life,
No sea where tradewinds drive to foreign ports,
Where navies clash and danger leads to fame.
I'd rather sail and drown on my first cruise
Than mildew for a lifetime by the bay."

Her eyes grew wide with terror and surprise,
For never had she heard my thoughts rush out
So vehemently. But Hilda had no fear
In her own faith. "You're talking wickedly.
Aren't we all given the places where we are
To stay just there? Whoever does what's right
Should always feel contented with his lot
And not dispute with Providence. Only think.

You know your mother loves you, and we all
Admire you and expect great things of you.
But why not do them here?"
"Mend chicken coops
And dig potatoes? Hilda, take my word,
I wasn't *meant* to stay here. In my heart
The call to launch out in the bigger world
Is like the voice of God; it murmurs low
And urgent as the steady southwest wind,
Summoning me to find the bigger place
That I'm to fill. Don't hinder me,—and yet
Please don't forget me. I'll come back sometime,
I hope, and find you as you have always been."
She could not comprehend it, but she felt
That I spoke truth.—In silence we rowed back;
She musing with a puzzled, anxious look,
I dreaming of my future on the sea.

PART II

SEA

Sea Song

I have lent myself to thy will, O Sea!
To the urge of thy tidal sway;
My soul to thy lure of mystery,
My cheek to thy lashing spray.
For there's never a man whose blood runs warm
But would quaff the wine of the brimming storm.
As the prodigal lends have I lent to thee,
For a day or a year and a day.

And what if the tale be quickly told
And the voyage be wild and brief?
I can face thy fury with courage bold
And never a whine of grief,
Though peril-fanged is thy grisly track,
The ship goes out that never comes back,

And the sailor's whitened bones are rolled
In the surge of the whitening reef.

The shores recede, the great sails fill,
The lee rail hisses under,
As we double the cape of Lighthouse Hill
Where sea and harbor sunder.
Then here's to a season of glad unrest!
With an anchor of hope on the seaman's breast,
Till I claim once more from thy savage will
A soul that is fraught with wonder.

FORTH from the harbor, forth into the world,
Forth on the heaving billowy ocean flood!
No matter how or where, the crucial point
Of each man's life is when he leaves the bay,
Spreads his white sails before the ruffling breeze,
And takes the first plunge of the hollow surge.

Oh, thrill of first adventure! Overhead
Flew pearly cloudlets; on our lee the cliffs,
So formidable once, were fading low;
Beneath, the cloven wave's translucent green
Sprang into spray along the dipping stem;
And somewhere out beyond those curling crests
Lay, golden as with promise, the unknown.
I skip the dull routine. A sailor's life
On board a fishing boat is not much worse
Than most apprenticeships. It seems to me
That when a man signs on he takes his job
For good or bad. Best like it if he can;
If not, still pride and shame will see him through.
The work was heavy, deep-sea lines and trawls,
With all the seaman's regular round besides:
Fog, storm, long hours of strain, bad food, hard words
And little rest; yet somehow, all in all,

The time was good. It's good for any man
To know he fills a place, to find himself
Coming to blows with rough reality
And learning the great game. But more than this,
I liked the open, felt a dignity
In playing my small part on such a stage,
The clouds for background and the untiring sea
For my antagonist. My companions, too,
Though harsh of voice and feature, had a look
Of strength, I almost think of majesty,
Like Roman legionaries, battle-scarred
By spears of wild barbarians in the north.
We had great moments. Not a day went by
But brought its tithe of wonder: changing lights
And aspects of the sea, a mighty fish,
An ocean-liner cleaving through the fog,
Old tales of daring told beneath the stars.
The acrid taste has mellowed with the years,

And when I choose a vintage of the past
And set it to my lips, a youthful glow
Steals from the well-stored wine of memory
Into my blood.
I sit here by the lamp,
Letting my thoughts drift back indefinitely
Till some one scene grows clearer than the rest.
Just now it seems to be a lonely night
Of moonlight, mid the fog.—We slid, close-hauled,
Across an easy swell. The fog all day
Had baffled us; towards midnight now it thinned,
Showing a dim wraith of the rising moon,
Lustreless and forlorn. An eerie shock
I felt to see beneath no waves at all,
To float as it were in chaos—for the mist
We lay in seemed to hang unpoised in space—;
Then vaguely to discern the chilly track
Of the faint moonlight's fingers in a line
Of blurred reflections o'er the black profound.

I was a weak soul in a world unborn,
Intent upon that trembling, dubious sign
Of nature taking form. An unseen brush
Painted an unseen canvas with pale strokes
Of silver.—While I dreamed, a heavy hand
Fell on my shoulder, and a rumbling voice
Growled out, "Eight bells! Stand by for observations."
I fetched my book and by the lantern's light
Took down the figures, as the fog-bank passed
And Bill could sight the Dipper. Strange it was
There in the moonlight on the slanting deck
To gaze across the weltering bright expanse,
To hear the lap and gurgle of the waves,
And then by looking at some distant star
And doing sums like those I had done at school
To ascertain just where on that wide sea

Our little boat was tossing.—Very
strange!
Out there, a thousand miles from home,
but so
I learned how science rules the modern
world.

Finding me quick at figures, Captain
West
Had made old Bill teach me the rule-of-
thumb
Of navigation. In a month or so
I picked up quite a smattering, learned to
use
The sextant, calculate our longitude
And plot the course. A lucky thing for me!
For when old Bill was thrown and broke
his leg,
I took his place, consulting now and then,
And all went smoothly. When I came
back home
The bay meant nothing to me, I was all
On fire to make my fortune on the sea.
Folks thought me even prouder than be-
fore,

But it was not so; now I felt myself
A smaller person in a larger world
Where I must make my way, cost what it might.
My thoughts and speech were only of the sea,
So that poor Mother knew not what to do,
And Hilda was less friendly; only Jane
Hailed my new triumph with unstinted joy.
I studied navigation day and night,
Then in the spring I came before the Board
And got my license. Uncle Alden knew
The owner of a coaster, and through him
I shipped as second mate.
I shall not tell
The details of my progress, how at first
The ocean seemed a highway to success
Broad and inviting, with the "realms of gold"
Not far to seek, just somewhere over there
Across yon purple rim, beyond the lift
Of grey sails in the offing. Day by day

With tireless confidence I laid my course
And strove to get my bearings; here I had gained,
There lost, and there again had been becalmed.
What wonder if a sailor thinks it luck?
'Tis bitter discipline to do one's best
And find that all the striving comes to naught,
Frustrated by the whim of wind and tide.
So the first years it seemed, I had no way
Of showing I could fill a higher place.
Then came promotion, and from that time on
I saw that every sailor has his chance
With others. If his will-power gives him steam
To drive him, and if knowledge holds the wheel,
He'll dock with flags a-flutter, bands a-blare.
Life after all is science and hard work;
Failure means ignorance on the quarter-deck
Or laziness in the engine-room. The start

Counts something, but good reckoning
counts far more.
The trip, God willing, is a fair long
course,
The better boat has time enough to win.—
You'll note my figures changed from sail
to steam;
'Twas not an error but a simple fact,
For after various berths I found myself
Mate on an ocean liner. I was then
But twenty-five, still young for such a
post.

I liked my calling, liked to think I
lived
By service to my fellows; not by tricks
Of pulling down some rival from above
And climbing to his place, but by sheer
grit,
By fighting only with the elements,
Where victory meant a gain to all con-
cerned.
With every trip I came to love the sea
More passionately,—that purple foaming
cup

Raised by an unseen giant toward the sun,
While in the midst our vessel crept along
Like some poor kicking, wing-bedraggled
fly.

Eager of spirit as I was, the sea
Gave to me always more than I could
take.
That huge impersonal personality
Through changing moods of loveliness
and strength,
Of starlight calm or devastating storm,
Was always new and vital. No contempt
Was bred of long acquaintance, but an
awe
Deep as the depth of mid-sea solitudes
Fell on my heart with every dawn that
bloomed,
A saffron-petaled lily, in the east.
For Aphrodite, mystic and divine
As in the tales that charm the soul of
youth
In men and nations, floating on her shell
Would wake and smile to greet the quick-
ening light

Whose radiant fingers would unloose the robe
Of rainbow mist that veiled her shining form,
Fair as the rosy-tinted Alpine snow,
And graceful as the gently curving wave.
Here was no Venus to enflame desire
And break the spell of dreaming, but a girl,
The maiden Aphrodite, ocean-born,
Unwed, unwooed, unseen of mortal man,—
The lover's earliest thought enshrined in light,
Not touched by mid-day warmth. How oft I knew
Delight no words can hint at! It would steal
Upon me with the dawn, fading toward noon,
And with the sunset hovering once again
Above the glinting waters, till it passed,
Leaving to me a joy more sharp than pain.

Such was the ocean's loveliness. Its
might,
With throes of shattering, stupendous
power,
Aroused in me a sort of berserk lust
To match with this grim foeman breast
to breast.
When the fierce gale descended with the
dark,
Lashing the waves which grinned like
snarling wolves,
And the keen wind flew screaming
through the spars,
I felt my Anglo-Saxon blood run fast
To greet the combat. Then before my
gaze
A field of dismal carnage dimly stretched,
Where heroes clove their way through
walls of shields,
And whizzing arrows laid the spearmen
low.
Or my stern fancy, with a bolder flight,
Would limn the fatal Twilight of the
Gods:
The warriors of Valhalla grappling there

With giants and with demons, mighty Thor
Strangling the Midgard Serpent, Odin near
In deadly combat with the Fenris Wolf.
I heard the whinnying of Valkyrie steeds
Above the murky world, mid rolling clouds
Shot through with shafts of lightning. Thus my mind,
Fed with Norse fable, peopled all the stage
With mythic monsters, when the wind and sea
Would summon these gaunt shadows of the past,
Bidding me claim the ancient heritage
Bequeathed to me by viking ancestors.

I could not long indulge myself with scenes
Of Greek and Norse mythology. My work
Was constant and exacting, a mistake

Of hand or judgment and our ship had gone
To Davy Jones. Unending mathematics
Did now what once the practiced eye would do.
All this has science wrought. So much is now
Done by machinery, that the race of men
Are scarcely more than tools in the great mill
Of modern industry. Our lower self
Is bestial, as the law of flesh ordains.
Small room for soul is left between the two,
Upper and nether mill-stones, grinding man
'Twixt brutish sense and hard, insistent mind.
'Tis only Nature saves us from ourselves,
Who with her simple love serene and strong,
Her all-enchanting daylight wizardry,
Calls to the child in us to come and play,
To leave the unhealthy house of goblin thoughts

That scratch and scamper in the empty rooms,
And come into the open. If we yield,
She will not cease to draw us on and on,
Leading us mystically back to God.
And what more godlike has our universe
Than the unchanging, ever-changeful sea,
The transient symbol of eternal truth?

Sometimes amid the storm I heard a voice
That penetrated to my soul; a voice,
Persistent through the tremor of the winds
And deeper than the crashing of the waves,
Which gave me confidence. 'Twas not the voice
Of reason, which had taught me to despair.
The tones which then I heard were for the ear
Of faith alone, and dimly as they spoke,
They told me that my life was in His care

Who had made the sea and held it in His hand.
Once in especial did I feel that faith,
In a West Indian hurricane:—waves mast-high
And purplish black beneath a sky which hung
Like the Great Terror, while a ghastly light
Shone through, as if the malice of his eyes
Glared out beneath the menace of his frown.
Though gale and billow rushed at his command,
Yet he, beholding with satanic pride,
Forbore to turn his Nero thumb and give
The signal to destroy us. We meanwhile
Fought for two days to meet the storm head-on,
Our small ship lurching down the ocean hills
As to some dread abyss, then pausing, rising
With slow heart-sickening effort, throwing tons

Of foamless water from her forward deck,
To climb another hill with drunken heave
And topple helpless downward. As her bow
Thus overhung, a smaller wave would smite
Like a skilled boxer's fist beneath the chin,
Shattering the strength. A sidewise blow would drive
Us bulwarks under, pushing ever down,
Till scarcely we could stagger up again.
Within the ship 'twas dark as doom, and screams
Of women rang like shrieks of tortured souls.
On the third day the rudder was torn off,
The engine stalled, the steel plates wrenched and bent
Till water poured in through a score of seams.
The wind was even stronger than before,
The sky more angry and the waves more huge.

No one had slept, our food was running
short,
And we were rolling crippled in the
trough
Of waves so steep we hardly saw the sky
Between them. Then at last the captain
paused
From fighting, and his tense-drawn face
relaxed.
(I was alone with him in the pilot house.)
His solemn gentle look was strange to me
Amid such pressing peril, till he spoke:
"Carr, under God, we've done the best we
could.
We'll leave it to His will, perhaps He
means
To show how vain our efforts are and
make
Us trust in Him entirely.—Well, I do,
And if we sink next minute, as we may,
I'll never think but He ordained it so.
And yet His Hand might save us even
now."
I looked toward heaven as the vessel rose,

And there above the wave's long crest I saw
A blue rift open in the pall of cloud,
And thin pure rays of sunlight spilling through.
Then the Great Terror trembled, and the glare
Faded within his eyes, his form dislimned,
He shrank away before the smile of God.—
That night the tempest fell and we were saved.
There was God's mercy. Oftener still His love
Would be made visible, when, sunset-blest,
My gaze would drift across the glimmering floor,
Illimitably lovely, till it reached
And rested on the glowing citadels
Of rare celestial promise, crowned with light
Eternal; for although the sun would sink,
My soul would take such living hues of joy

That memory's brush might use them once
again
To paint the scene in hours when prison-
ing skies
Would shroud the day with gloom.
These greater times
Of exaltation and of insight came
But seldom with their high transcendent
power;
Not often was it granted me to read
The word of God (I mean the world)
with faith
So happy. No, nor could I always feel
The Grecian beauty or Teutonic strength
Reflected from the myths I used to read
In school-boy days. Most of the time it
seemed
The ocean was a well-established friend,
Breathing a cheerful boisterous comrade-
ship,
Jostling and tussling as we romped along
To try my strength and temper, keep me
fit
In mind and muscle. Or again in calm

The deep would be a woman, gentle-
browed,
But full of ancient guile which blinked
askance
As serpent-subtle as the liquid look
Of Cleopatra's veiled and languid eyes.
Something there was of wickedness,—
which all
Must meet who would not shun the whole
of life,—
With much of whimsical indifference.
So looked the ocean, and I loved the look.
And there were other moods innumerable:
Fits of the sullens under leaden clouds,
Fizzlings of kittenish temper. Then at
night
In stifling calms of tropic latitudes,
The sea would slumber like an odalisque
With silver bosom and voluptuous limbs
Foam-pillowed there beneath the passion-
ate stars.
So Nature gave me knowledge of the
world,
And things which most men seek for in
their kind

I saw in this her mighty looking-glass.
'Twas for such knowledge that I bore the pains
Of endless mathematics. As I said,
I had small leisure in those prentice years
For anything but charts and logarithms.
A host of fancies filled my vacant hours
Just as in boyhood, though I spent some time
Learning the speech of countries where we touched.
So life was well divided; strenuous work
As hard and actual as a marline-spike,
And leisure on whose soft and dreamy tide
I floated to another world. No doubt
But that I nursed a growing self-conceit
Of my own way of living, for I sought
No friends, I asked for no society;
The world of suffering, all the vast complex
Of human strife and sorrow, was for me
An ugly tangle—none of my affairs;
I had my separate duty to fulfill.

With other officers I seldom went
Beyond the laugh of messmate jollity.
My puritan training by the bay had given
A feeling of reserve when glasses clinked
And speech threw off restraint; my studious bent
Held me aloof as often,—better give
My time to mastering French than lose it all
In vain enjoyment. What New England word
Holds so much ready-made philosophy
As the word "waste"? I didn't mean to waste.
I never spoke of what I really loved—
My memories of the bay, my lone sea-dreams—
But used to watch and listen to the rest
Without much mixing in. Though I became
The target of their wit as once I had been
The mark of school-boy snowballs, yet I grew
Ere long case-hardened. Thus on sea or shore

I lived alone and did the better work.
Women I met but did not learn to know.
The thought of Hilda kept me from the haunts
Of the worse kind; and had I really found
A girl who would have roused the best in me,
I lacked the dash that storms a woman's heart,
And my profession never left me long
In any single port. Such then I was
At twenty-five, not lonely but alone
And quite content to stay so.
It was now
For the first time I really had a chance
To see strange lands and peoples. From the ship
These lands had seemed a moving-picture show
Unrolling in an endless film, while we
In our high station were the gallery gods.
My days on shore had been more thronged with sights—
The film had run more quickly, one might say,—

But I had never lived myself into
The life of those I saw. At last one March
Our boat was dry-docked, and the officers
Given a three-months' leave. Before, I used
To spend my furloughs by the bay, but now—
My eyes began to twinkle at the thought—
I was for Paris! 'Twas not that I meant
To plunge into the current, just to taste
The joy of danger. Puritan principles
Grow somewhat out of fashion by long wear.
So done, I settled at a cheap hotel,
Drank absinthe, roamed the Latin quarter, went
To student balls, revues and cabarets.
I saw the usual sights—the Louvre, Versailles—
And being alone spent all my time indeed
Most commonplacely. In the afternoon
I often took a carriage in the Bois,
Till when the useless melting of the francs

Wore on my nerves, I would dismount in haste.
'Twas pleasant wandering through the ordered groves
To watch the amorous couples; she with looks
Bent on the ground, mute and expressionless;
He voluble as a magpie, leaning toward her
With watery eyes and weak importunate hands.
Better I liked the family picnic groups:
The fat old father dozing with his pipe,
The mother packing up, their progeny
Tossing a colored ball—they never caught it,
But laughed and ran and tossed, and laughed the more.
At night I strolled along the glittering Seine,
Noting the richness of the yellow lights
Set in a violet haze, or softlier still
Reflected from the black and broken stream,

While far above rose the gray spectral towers
Of Notre Dame. Then with a sudden burst
I would come out into that blind white glare,
The Place de la Concorde. A dash across,
And I would enter the "Elysian Fields,"
Cool haunts of quiet, noble avenues
Of trees—though scarcely then inhabited
By spirits of the blest. But to be frank
The sights I saw within doors or without,
The painted women and the leering men,
Were more than I could stomach. I had read
In Swinburne of the glories of the flesh,
"Rapture and roses," but a single glimpse
Of pleasure, so miscalled, sufficed for me.
It seemed as though the vices of the East,
The abominable rites of Ashtoreth,
Were here transplanted to put forth new flowers
A hundred-fold more poisonous and obscene.
I tried to vent the fancy in a song.

The Song of Paris

Oh, I am the new Astarte,
The goddess of midnight sin.
At eve when I mount to my throne on high
The terrible hue of leprosy
Gleams white on my scaly skin.
But the music clashes and ye grow blind,
The lust-whip lashes you, sense and mind,
Ye knaves, ye knaves,
Ye knaves that boast you are free.
Though ye quaff amain till the quick champagne
Makes cruel the heart and mad the brain,
Ye are slaves, ye are slaves,
Yea, thrice-bound slaves to me.

Oh, I am the modern Circe
Of men with the souls of swine.
Blaspheming the purest of gods above,
You feed upon lust and call it love,
Ye man-seeming beasts of mine.
You may drink or dance, you may drab or play

Till you shrink askance at the dawn of day
From the flame, from the flame,
From the flame of the angry sun.
Whirl on, whirl on like the dizzy roulette,
The grim old banker will have you yet
Ere the game, ere the game,
Ere the perilous game be done.

One morning, steered by fate, I drifted through
The Luxembourg Museum, and very soon,
Still steered by fate, I came upon a shoal
Of foreign paintings. Very listlessly
I tacked about, when with a sudden puff
A gust of feeling took my sails aback
And laid me on my beam-ends.—There it hung
An innocent little canvas, four by three;
But with the first quick glimpse it took my soul
Into another world.—I seemed to stand,
A youngster in his teens, beside the Bay
In Farmer Lawton's field, looking beyond

The new-piled ricks toward Gladding's Cove.
The clouds,
High and transparent, floated meltingly
Across the pale blue sky. 'Twas afternoon.
The day had been a sultry one, for still
The scent of yarrow and bayberry was warm,
Although a fresh sea-breeze was blowing in
And crisping the smooth inlet.—I beheld,
I reveled, but a sinking emptiness
Came o'er my spirit. Something once I'd had
That I had done without, but wanted now;
It was not home or kin, not Hilda even.
Then—then the curtains of the past swung back
And there he stood: short, stout and jocular
As ever, with his keen dark eyes alert
To pierce into the heart of things, his glance

Kind, but less kindly than inspiring. Ah!
At last I knew—I needed comradeship:
An eye to see the best in me, a voice
To call that best to being. Only once
Had such a friend been mine; I bent and read
His name upon the picture: Atwood Brinton!

Half an hour later I was being shown
Up a dark staircase, at the second door
I knocked, the door was opened, there he stood!
He eyed me, started, took me by the arm,
And turned me to the light, then looked again.
"Yes, by the Lord, it's Alden Carr!" With that
He gripped my hand in both of his. Ten years
Faded, and I who stood a head above him
Shrank to a boy; the tears were in my eyes.

Rare were the days that followed, for 'tis rare

After a ten years' gap that severed ties
Unite so promptly. Brinton, I soon found,
Had overworked himself, was feeling blue—
"Shop and sophistication," he once said;
"I need the tonic of a country face
For my complaint." We talked of life and art
And books; he wondered that I'd read so much.
"Some of my seed fell on good ground, I hope;
It hasn't always been so." When I grew
More free with him I found at length a chance
To show my "Song of Paris." "Not so bad,"
His comment was: "Been reading Swinburne, eh?"
My blush was answer. "No, not bad at all,
For your small point of view. But mind, young man,

You've only seen one phase, and note besides
It's seldom all you see is all there is."
He took me round, and showed me other sights:
The scientists, the cheerful family life,
The genuine artists—not the kind that wear
Slouch hats, loose neckerchiefs and corduroys;
But normal-looking citizens. We made
Excursions to the country, saw the folk
That Millet painted, visited châteaux,
All harmony and elegance. What cliffs
We found at Etretat, what glass at Chartres,
What pretty woodland nooks at Fontainebleau!
And everywhere I saw beneath the scum,
Like a deep stream that runs through stagnant pools,
The true French people, clean and pure and strong.

All this I owed to Brinton. Art and life
Revealed their hidden treasures at his word.
Much he had seen, and two rare traits of soul
In him were blended: first, a love of life,
A sprightly, never-tamed enthusiasm;
And, hardly less, a firm judicial sense
Of intellectual honesty. The two
Would often be at war, but for myself
I half despise a man whose ways are set
In a hard mould of self-complacency,
As mine had been too much. "Don't bind your eyes
With prejudice and play at blind-man's-buff
Your whole life through," was Brinton's favorite saw.
Why we got on so well I hardly know,
Except that I did feel within my heart
A longing for the truth, a willingness
To try to see. Whatever was the cause,
We chimed; the years between his age and mine

But made the concord sweeter. Then one day
While rummaging through his pictures, suddenly
Turning from an old canvas, Brinton cried
"Let's go to Italy!" That night we went.

We settled first at Florence. For a while
My wits were at a loss; the city seemed
So fearfully run down, and half the sights
Were hid in churches dismal as the grave,
Where images and incense made me think
Of idol-worship. Michelangelo,
However, took me prisoner at his will
With one high sovereign look; I needed but
To see his David kindling with God's rage—
Funny! that marble eyes can flash—the while
He measured off the distance to his mark,
The forehead of Goliath. So I think

We all should do: have temper in control,—
Heart like a boiler, head the engineer,—
And then the Medici tombs! I never saw
The human body since without a leap
Of wonder in my pulse.—The other chaps
Were hard to know, but Brinton helped me out.
"You don't like Giotto? Well I'd be surprised
If you did like him at the start. But look!
That fresco is the voice of a strong faith
Speaking the language of a child. His faith
Is all he tried to give; the lesser men
Can mouth big words or scatter flowers of speech.
And Fra Angelico is much the same.
Just realize you're looking at a soul,
And you'll see right. Those pink and gilded saints—
What are they? Why, the joy of holiness
Made visible—no lesser thing than that.
Art after all is just a sort of dress

For soul: sometimes too meagre, oftener
though
Too rich—observe that Titian!—or
again,
Fantastic—Botticelli! There's a soul
Compact of subtle sweetness, but his garb
Is so outlandish that the average man
Thinks us all fools for bowing at his
shrine.
Perhaps the world,—nature and man
alike,—
Is but a manifold garment, as Carlyle
Is fond of putting it; and all our aim
Should be through all these forms to seek
the Soul
Which is in all and *is* all."
Every day
I learned to see art better, till at last
I chose my favorites: Raphael first of
course,
Supremely lovely and supremely great;
Tender Correggio, humanly divine;
Aërial Tintoretto. Why I chose
These three I scarce can tell—mere chance
maybe.

In each of them I felt a special power,
Direct and elemental.
But although
Art loomed so big, it did not even then
Block the free view of nature. Best of all
Our trip, I think, were the long walks we took
In the enfolding sunlight. Oft we scanned
From high Fiësole that scene of scenes:
The city girt with terraced orange groves,
Giotto's white shaft, the Duomo's sombre eye,
The palace-towers and steeples. But in soul
We looked upon the cradle of the arts,
And Florence, the old nurse, her eyes grown dim
With dreaming of her sons.—Then we would turn
To view a modern phase, the countryside:
Its new-turned loam and dust-gray olive trees,

The almond buds upturned like cool pink flames
On branching candelabra; over there
A yellow villa suavely indolent
Mid cypress walks and rose-vines; close at hand
A smooth white curve of road, a stone-breaker
Who crouched in shade and cracked right merrily
With his small hammer. Now a ponderous team
Of milk-white oxen shouldered into sight,
Red ribbons on their horns; the driver wore
A crimson sash and flicked a raw-hide whip.
A little further by a cottage door
A stolid beauty, grandly undisturbed,
Nursed her bambino. Next, around the turn,
We'd find a group of idlers round an inn,
While to the sway of fiddle and of pipe
Slim youths took hands and waltzed.

Ere long this life,
So pagan, free and bold, began to melt
My stock of narrow notions. I could see
Such ways were healthy, though they were
not mine.
And in the church or by the wayside cross
Was pure religion, credulous possibly,
But suited to the needs of simple hearts.
"The world is all one country"—that's
the way
These kind Italians put it, and it's true.
Easy to read in books, but very hard
To grasp in fact—at least it was to me.

Rome we saw too and Venice, neither
though
Seemed half as genuine as Florence did.—
I haven't Byron's brain, far less his voice,
And ruins are to me just ruins.—But still
With Brinton's help I caught a glimpse
or two
Amid the jumbled chaos; this at least.
"Learn to see art and life as one," he
said,
And made me think it over. "Art is life

Seen by a master's eye. You don't see all,
But you see deeper. Art's the specialist
Who helps you look at life; and as for life,
If you've not seen enough of life to feel
The life in art—best leave them both alone
And live mechanically with the crowd."

Despite his flow of spirits I could see
That Brinton often grew depressed; no doubt
The years weighed down his elasticity,
But with his stoicism in worldly things
He ought to accept the unavoidable,
I thought. One evening as the time drew near
For our return, he spoke out: "Alden, lad,
I told you once not to tie up too soon.
Perhaps I was wrong, at any rate too soon
Is better than too late—or not at all.
I'm getting melancholy; all my life
I've drawn on my vitality—for art,

For talk, for everything—and now my balance
Is running short. A woman in your life
Gives back to you what you lavish on the world,
And children show you that you shall not die
Even on earth here. I have lived in you,
Alden, these last two months, and as we part
The best advice I have is *not* to do
As I have done. Go back then to your queen
Of curds and cream, your Hilda, marry her
If things are still the same. If not, then keep
Your weather eye open as you cruise along."

My furlough finished, I rejoined my ship
With treasure-freighted eyes and mind too full
Of undigested wisdom, but my heart

Now knew a keener pang of loneliness
Than ever. Brinton's parting words sunk deep;—
I wanted more than friendship after all.
The thought of Hilda often starred my dreams
With tender radiance, but my later self
Seemed large as Sindbad's genie. How go back
Into that cramped bay-bottle and be corked?
I was a citizen of the world, forsooth!
'Twas summer now; the season had come round
When human birds of passage flock across
To Europe, and the thronging life on board
Did but accent my blank of solitude.
The mischievous youngsters romping on the deck
Woke memories of school-days, girlish laughter
Came to me from some happy distant world

That half belonged to me—I had read so much
Of women and romance. With fierce regret
I felt that I had shunned the life of men
To skulk in books, which, as at length I knew,
Gave me but murmurs of a sea more strange
Than my beloved ocean. I looked on
And longed to join, to mingle with the whirl,
Be lost in it and lose my lonely self.
My spirit languished in its narrow bay
And longed to venture past the harbor mouth
That shut me from the world of men outside.

Adventure to the young man's mind spells woman.
'Twas at New York I saw her come on board.
Unknown till then, she touched the memory

Of my first view of ocean. Tall she was,
Darkly majestic, falcon-eyed, her glance
Moulded of starlight mystery and soft fire
Most like the moonless glow of tropic seas.
She looked upon me idly, caught my gaze,—
That instant I was hers, deep, deep submerged
In the first glamour of those dangerous eyes.
Their look was not like Hilda's, frank and true
(The bay smile), but a storm-cloud, lightning-fringed.

My soul was sailing an enchanted gulf
Through labyrinths unknown and treacherous reefs,
While fragrant airs, from lotos islands borne,
Stung the dull sense but steeped the wakeful mind

To slumber at the helm.—Such dreams as
this
Held me by daylight on a crowded deck.
The greater then her magic. She had
power
To waft her willing lover with a word
From commonplace to-day to lands of
wonder
In timeless regions, lands of desperate
deeds,
(The flame-wild impulses of lawless love
Which rend the robes of faith)—where
Helen mourned,
And cold Semiramis curled her scornful
lip,
Where Dido walked and proud-souled
Guinevere.
Such was our world and such was Rosa-
mund.
A woman with a past, the world might
say.
What then? The sea has witnessed many
a crime
Of love and blasting hate and fell revenge

Since Iseult paced the deck of Tristram's ship
With murder in her heart for him she loved.

One rants, no doubt, speaking of such a time,
Where facts would seem but vulgar. All I know
Is that for me, despite the taint of wrong,
Those moments had a draught of ecstasy
Not all debasing; I would not attempt
All that a bolder man had scorned to miss.
Her tyranny had bounds, but for the most
I was her plaything. In our secret nook
High up beneath the chill luxurious moon
How often would she tease me with her lips
And taunt me with her domineering eyes
Because I dared not take, till spurred and checked,
I yielded to her weakly, grovelingly,
Owning myself no match; whether she willed
To keep me off, or with more mad caprice

Leaned back into my arms and closed her eyes.
Her mastery was to me a noble trait.
Science she had to gauge the sudden thrill
Of leaping pulses, or to drug the soul
With anodynes and fierce intoxicants.
All that she did, she did from love of power;
An arbitrary whim would give the spark,
And straight her will would flame, her changing moods
Were less from joy of mischief than desire
To exercise her strength. We think the sea
Malignant, but 'tis not so; quite by chance
Calm and typhoon alternate, each as true
A phase as other. Yet I feel the ocean
Has joy of being, joy of curbless power,
Whether it spare, destroy or cast adrift;
Our part to meet each mood with steadfast mind
And our best skill.—The passage of eight days

Fled like a cloud, and Rosamund at the last,
Deaf as the billow to a castaway,
Laughing—as well she might—to hear my prayers
And idle talk of marriage, flung me off
Like so much seaweed on a barren shore.

Crippled in strength and driven from my course,
I swung a long while helpless, soul-becalmed
In sluggish doldrums and sargasso seas.
Then, winning free, I veered with random flaws
And dangerous currents; or, to put it plain,
I worked without a purpose, gave myself
To rougher uses, joining with the rest
In drink and cards. I might have fallen low
But for the stern New England self-respect
Formed in my bay-life by my mother's care,

Jane's pride in me and Hilda's friendly
trust.
But even so, the fibre of my thought
Was coarsened and I listened now to tales
Of woman's moral ugliness. One of
these,
No doubt because I made the case my
own,
Obsessed me till I put it into verse.

Pedro's Plunge

The sky was a dazzling turquoise,
The sea was an amethyst,
And the palm-fringed shore of a Cuban
bay
By the westering light was kissed,—

When a steamboat came to anchor
In the curve of the hot white sand,
And a score of native boats put out,
By swarthy half-breeds manned.

Oh, some they would sell their luscious
fruit,

And some they would sing and play,
And some would dive for a copper coin
Flung into the waveless bay.

But one like a bronze Greek statue,
Disdaining so mean a prize,
Gazed up at a girl by the railing
With humble passionate eyes.

Then the calm of the scene was broken
By a shout from a dozen throats:
"Shark! shark!" and the splashing swimmers
Were tumbled into the boats.

The girl looked out at the water,
No shark did her gaze discern,
She looked at the eager Pedro
And saw his dark eyes burn.

She held out a bright gold sovereign
With a gesture of proud command
And threw it out from the vessel
With a toss of her slim white hand.

The blood of his Spanish fathers
Still pulsed in him bold and hot.
What is death for the smile of a woman?
And he dived like a plunging shot.—

He dived, and the winking gold-piece
Was clutched in his firm brown fist,
And he turned to strike for the surface
With a sudden, desperate twist.

The beautiful girl applauded
And leaned from her vantage-place
As he rose, but she saw no pleasure
In the look of his set sad face.

The water was cut between them
By a fin and a churning tail,
A streak of white gleamed deadly bright.—
The girl shrank back from the rail.

That instant the great shark got him
And made for its deep-sea home,
While vainly behind them shots rang out
And hissed in the scarlet foam.

Such bitterness was mine, nor was it helped
By failure in promotion. Slowly then
My mind regained its vision till I saw
How opportunity had passed me by
While I was dawdling, so I took my chart
And got my bearings.—My old life was gone,
Ambition and sheer youth no more sufficed
To drive me. Rosamund's flame had burnt away
That glad unpausing energy, and I asked:
Why should I slave more hard than other men.
I could have worked for Rosamund, but that hope
Had sunk forever, and I knew 'twas well.
Yet, as it seemed, my buoyancy no more
Sufficed to bear me up amid the crowd.

One day soon after as I strolled along
The level deck, a little girl ran out
And fell against me. Looking down, I saw

Blue eyes, part wonder and part merriment,
Smile up with a pretty confidence that I
Like all the world was friendly. When I paused,
A lady from a neighboring steamer-chair
Called out, "Come here directly, Dorothy!
Don't stop the officer." But I praised the child
And begged to take her walking. After that
I came each day; the father too I met.
I never hope to find a happier three
Than they were: Dorothy, some three years old,
Gay as the sunlight on the dancing waves;
The mother quiet, kind and equable
Like Hilda, proud of all her daughter did,
But deprecating too much praise from me;
The father silent with a deep content
As one who had no more to ask of life.
They made a charmèd circle, where the world

Might not intrude its busy selfishness.
At first I shared the habit of their joy
Which I so long had lacked, but when we reached
New York, a grief that almost rose to fear
Possessed me, thinking that my life would soon
Be lonelier by the contrast. I resolved
To seek the bay and Hilda, there to win
If possible a heaven of my own.
The ocean waves of life were rough, I found,
Good for the buffets which a man should bear,
But bitter, restless, void of pity. Now
The bay no more seemed narrow than the nest
Seems narrow to the parent bird; and she,
Hilda as I had known her, seemed more fair
Than any lady clad in gowns of silk.
I yearned to meet love where I had found it first,
To cool my lips beside the pebbly spring

That poured refreshment for my childish need.

We passed the Statue and I said good-bye
To my three friends, a blessing in my heart
More earnest than my stammering speech could show.
Returning to my cabin—such was fate!—
I found a letter lying for me there
In Hilda's hand. I kissed and looked at it
Before I opened. After many months
Of silence, she my old-time love, to write
Ere I could come, beseech her to forgive
My long neglect, and ask her to be mine!
At last I opened, read: As we had been
Such friends, she took upon herself to write
Instead of Phil.—Why did she drag in him?—
To share with me at once the happy news
Of—was I drunk, or dreaming, or gone mad?—

No, there it stood; the smoothly-flowing style
Had swept me on a rock. Too late, too late!
She wrote that she was pledged to marry —Phil!
I ground my teeth. That boy to cut me out!—
My bumpkin brother win the girl I loved!

Such was life's irony. It was hours before
I tried to reconcile my shattered wits
With the hard truth. Then I grew cynical:
Young lady, since you take so poor a fish,
'Tis well that Alden Carr escaped your net.
Finally in self-torture I set out
To try if Hilda's purpose might not change,
At least to see her. There she was, as sweet
As ever, not much older, but more grave
With the solemnity of plighted love.

At first I acted strangely, but her way
Soon won me from all rudeness. More
than that,
Fair as she was, I felt that now our hearts
No more were kin, nor could I wish them
so.
I prized my sea-strength, lonely as I felt,
Seeing once more the snugness of the bay.
Phil was a man now; I could see his worth
And wish him well in his great happiness;
But things were ordered otherwise for me.
No doubt Jane spoiled me, for she won-
dered so
At all my ways, half-foreign as they
seemed,
And what I had seen and done (much
magnified
By sisterly love)—in short I was for her
All she had ever hoped. Indeed she said
She long had given Hilda up for me,
Deciding I must bring some lady home
From foreign parts. Mother was also
kind,
Repressing half her usual discontent
And looking on me with a shade of awe.

I left them, but returned in two months' time
To celebrate the wedding. Hilda looked
So lovely in her simple village dress
I hardly dared to kiss the lips of her
Who now should be my sister, not my bride.
I shared the sober feast, shook hands with Phil
And bade him godspeed in his new estate.
Then I was off again in double doubt:
Nor sea nor bay accorded with me now;
I knew no other counsel in my heart
Than to forge blindly on in stoic mood,
Half careless to what port my ship might sail.

PART III

BAY AND SEA

Song of Bay and Sea

High on a ridge o'erlooking both the strands
My cottage stands.
In front the restless sea; behind, the bay
Where quiet ripples play.

In storm I watch the billows as they charge
The rock-piled marge,
Until tumultuous action's wine-like glee
Throbs wild and strong through me.

In calm I see the sunset's glimmering ray
Illume the bay,
And soft-hued joys of youth my vision bless
With memory's loveliness.

Thus all of life comes back: my boyhood first,
In visions nursed;

Then the hard fights amid the tempest's foam
On ventures far from home.

Therefore I pace the porch in calm content
For blessings blent,
And, thankful for the gifts which earth has given,
Await the will of Heaven.

I'M fifty-five now as I stand and look
In retrospect across my two-fold life
Of bay and sea. I've won a moderate place
And settled back into a mild routine,
Not hoping for much more, but satisfied
To live my fullest life in those I love.—
I'm fifty-five, but when I reach the time
Of which I now shall write, its fears and joys,
The time between fades like a morning fog
Before the ardor of remembered youth.

Once more across the broad Atlantic's back,
But now with heart more leaden than the clouds
That drifted o'er us in a gloomy shoal
Like ugly fish. My courage, long sustained
By hurry and excitement, had died out
Within me, and I felt that I was sick.
Tired in body by the ceaseless round
Of unremitting duty, worn in mind
By danger and responsible command,
I now had naught to save me from myself,
No hope, no gay diversion. Thus it was
That fever took me. When we came to France
The doctor thought it wise to put me off
At Cherbourg, where the hospital was good
And I might ride the squall out with a chance
Of quick recovery. It was well advised,
For I had six full weeks of sleepless nights
And hot interminable days of pain.

The torturing thirst, the aching in my head,
The blank routine of broth and bitter draughts!
How ready had I been to welcome death,
If but to break the loathsome chain of hours
That bound me to the torment of my bed!
At moments when the searing pain grew dull,
My mind seemed somehow to detach itself
And, hovering off, to gaze with pity down
On the poor body, starved and sunken-eyed.
I felt my soul might easily now take flight
To find the father whom I had not known.
In dreams like this I often seemed to lie
Beneath the pigeon-loft, hearing the coo
And flutter as I heard them when a child,
And feeling that I was not far from heaven.
Though some may find it wrong, I had no fear
Of death; my faults were many, as I knew,

But God's strong love was round me, and my trust
In His forgiveness left no room for doubt.

Meanwhile the busy nurses did their best
To save me, and their gentle cooling hands
Gave me continued comfort. They belonged
To some kind sisterhood; their dress and ways
Were quiet, and their voices very calm.
They and the doctor saved me, keeping up
My spirit till with some faint hope of life
I swallowed what they gave me. For a while
I was indifferent, but I liked a fight
Of any honest sort, and this was one:
Keeping my head above the tide of death.
Then followed better days, until one morn
Doctor La Grange came toward me with a look
So cheerful and so quizzical that I knew

Some kindness was in store before he said,
"Monsieur has gained so much in strength of late
That I have brought a visitor. My daughter
Has been so sorry for your pain, has felt
Such interest, that I thought you would not mind
If she should see you on the road to health."
I looked, and there, as timid and as sweet
As a white rosebud touched with bashful pink,
She stood and smiled on me. The rising tears
Lent crystal freshness to her wide gray eyes,
As, leaning lightly toward me with an air
That breathed of fragrant modesty, she gave
Her hand and tried to speak, and flushed again.
But when the words came, they were firm and clear:

"Poor Monsieur Carr-r," (how delicate
the r!)
"Father has told me how you bore your
pain
So bravely—you so young and far from
home.
I feared so much, and now that you are
safe,
I wish that I might help, too—if I can.
Do you like flowers?" And there she
showed a bunch
Of rosebuds that might each have been
herself,
Had she become a flower, as well I
thought
She might have easily done. For me, I
gazed
Not on the gift but on the giver, for
When one is weak, the spirit speaks direct
Without confusion and without restraint.
My spirit said, "I never saw a child
So clad in simple loveliness as you,
So dainty and so natural, with an air
Of free refinement, winsome self-control—
A garden prettiness, as one might say,

With something finer than a woodland flower,
Yet naught more studied." She divined my look
But was not angry;—she had come to please.
I took the roses, held them to my lips,
Managing it so quickly that I touched
The slender fingers, thanked her as I could
And tried to keep her longer. How she smiled
With drooping lashes, promising to come
And visit me again! I asked her name.
She told me "Seraphine."

From that day on
My strength rose like a tide. She called each noon.
Sometimes she talked, sometimes she read to me,
Or she would sing me graceful chansonnettes
With peasant melodies unvexed by art.
I wondered she could sing so, unconstrained

By all the other invalids, who would stare
And envy me. Then she would always say:
"It is not quite the place that one would choose.
But what of that?—I sing to make you well."
How fast I gained! The doctor used to say:
"Ah! that's the new prescription. Please affirm
You never had a better cordial yet."
Soon I was able to be wheeled outside,
And oh the joy! to drink the living air,
To drink the glowing earth, the shining sky
Into my pain-parched being—best of all
To drink the sea, with eyes and ears and lungs.

But wait, I go too fast; I saw no sea
At first, but only drab and dingy walls.
This the kind doctor noticed. The next day

Without so much as "by your leave" he came,
Put me into a carriage, drove me off,
Dosing me well with brandy on the way,
And brought me to his cottage on the cliffs,
Whence the blue ocean spread without a break.
There was a doctor knew his trade, for him
Not only Nature's drugs, but all her powers
Were listed in the pharmacopœia!
Is it ungrateful in me that I speak
Of air and ocean first as having wrought
My perfect cure? I tell but as it was;
The lower nature must support the higher,
The body is the spirit's pedestal.
But the first effort of my fresh-won strength
Was to turn head and heart toward Seraphine.
A nurse came with me from the hospital,
But Seraphine was by me half the day;

More charming in her home, more free to
show
The treasure of her nature—how the child
In her was but the virgin sheaf of petals
That wrapped a woman's passionate heart
within.
How sweet then to be helpless, have her
ask
If she should talk to me or read or sing.
Her sylph-like figure drifted through my
thoughts
As though to music, and I scarce could tell
Whether I slept or woke, my dreams of
her
Being so like, and her true self so fair.
Her face was haunted by an elf of joy,
Elusive, peeping from a dimple here,
Swinging invisible from a loosened curl,
Or laughing in the sparkle of her eye.

She listened to my stories of the sea
And told me of herself,—her mother's
death,
Her lessons at the convent, childish hopes

And maiden disappointments; for her thought
Flowed unconstrainedly from a mind unspoiled.
While I think back, there floats into my sense
A quaint old fisher tune with peasant words
Which Seraphine would sing me as I lay
Out on the balcony, and the time drew near
When I should climb back home across the broad
Blue wall of water. This was how it ran:

Fisher Song

Wind that touches my lonely lips,
Bear me a kiss from him.
He is away with the fishing ships
Out in the distance dim.
Sigh, sigh, wind of the sea,
Bearing my sailor-boy's kiss to me.

Wind that cries in the stormy dark,
Blow not so wild and free.
Steadily speed with my true-love's bark
Over the waves to me.
Speed, speed, wind of the sea,
Bearing my sailor-boy back to me.

The words are trite and bare, no doubt
the tune
Was homely too, but somehow when she
sang
A plaintiveness would steal into her voice
Till the soft tones would wreathe about
my heart
And bind it fast as in a net of flowers.

Each day as through my veins the
strength welled up,
There welled up ever higher in my breast
A love for Seraphine, a tenderness
For all her pretty ways, a sweet desire
For what her finer soul could give to mine;
Her instinct for the beautiful, her tact
In showing kindness (our New England
way

Makes of a gift a burden, but with her
A gently-spoken word upon the lips
Was natural as its perfume to the rose).
I needed things like this. I did not want
A lady for the cottage I should build,
But I did want that rarer sense of life
Which Brinton first had shown me,—the expanse
Of wider sympathies and higher thoughts,
A strain of music for the intervals
When the life-loom should pause, a rising-ground
Of discontent from which I could survey
My faults and then go down to drive them out.
I thought this over. I had lost my rash
Plunge-on-the-impulse spirit, so that now
When love had come again, I knew the heart
Should parley with the head ere both their fates
Might be resolved on. And I thought then too
For Seraphine. She was not in the way

To marry well. Her father—worthy man!—
Had little save the stock of gratitude
That poor folk paid him,—treasure fit for heaven,
But not a dower to tempt the second thoughts
Of marriage-minded Frenchmen. I had saved
A tidy little sum and had no fear
But we could get along. And yet I knew
'Twas a big risk:

We waited, and one day
The love-rose blossomed. If you ask me how,
I cannot say. A child of three years old
Knows when a bud has opened, and what more
Is there to tell? When Seraphine and I,
Subtly constrained by Love, had yielded up
Our inmost selves to serve at his command,

It seemed his might had dwelt in us of old;
Born in the dark, fostered by sun and dew,
Painfully working upward through the earth
To air. Then recognizing more and more
The wonder of its being, it had grown
Toward the fulfillment—stalk and leaf and bud.
At last when, urged by passion's deepening thrill,
The petals were unclosed, we found that love
Was just the perfect flowering of ourselves
Into a world of self-forgetfulness.
We seemed to breathe out fragrance not our own,
Like censers in the dim-lit shrine of God.

For many a midnight Seraphine and I
Had searched our souls and left off still in doubt
Of what to do. We met, our doubts dissolved

In the strong certainty of mutual love:
We could not live apart. From that time on
All barriers were but details, and the worst
Was telling the good doctor. Seraphine,
Though every glance gave token she was mine,
Had made me promise not to seek from her
My answer, till she had his firm consent.
Those were two anxious days; he had not dreamed
The truth. How haggard was his humorous face!
Yet never hard towards me. And when he saw
How trying was the long suspense to her,
He promised to decide. He came to me,
Asked of my home and people, but before
I found my voice, consented, took my hand
And prayed me to forgive him. He was sure

Of me from the first, he said, but could not bear
To lose his only child until he saw
That it must be so. Then he pulled me down
And kissed me twice (on either side of the nose)
For sign I was his son from that time forth.
I nearly laughed, but loved him all the more.

How rapt were we that evening! Seraphine
And I deep-lost in silent happiness,
Living in dream-long glances, dream-long sighs;
The doctor, half amazed to see his girl
A woman, murmuring still his undersong
Of "Seraphine, the little Seraphine!"
Too brief the hours. Back, back once more to life,
To win a fitting place for her I loved.
We parted, I exultant in the thought

That when I came again 'twould be to claim
My bride. How short the intervening weeks,
Filled with that vision, and again—how long
For the impatient lover! Poetry
Grew now a part of me. The pots and pans
I purchased for our house (by Jane's advice)
Were things of silver which the imagined touch
Of her white hands had visibly transformed.
What did I care that Mother used to say
In accents of distrust, "A foreign wife!"
What did I care though all the gossips talked
Of "Alden Carr's experiment" and hoped
(But most unhopefully) it would "turn out well."

The time passed slowly, but it passed, and then

I made my last trip as a bachelor,
And landed, with my heart and head and eyes
All whirling different ways. I hardly know
From that time till a full month afterward
Just where or who I was, but certainly
The day came round, we spoke the fateful words,
And Atwood Brinton slapped me on the back
With, "How does it feel to be a married man?"
And drawing me aside, with earnest tones,
Whispered, "First rate! you've bettered my advice."
Then came the wedding feast, the choked farewell,
The bustle of embarking, and at last
We two alone upon the moving ship.
'Twas then I felt the meaning slowly dawn
Of what my lips had promised; and my heart,
Dizzy with dreams, grew sober for the day

Of duty. No, the honeymoon (so mis-
called)
Is not a halcyon holiday for a man
Who sees the sphinx-like future gaze on
him
Inscrutably.—And Seraphine? Oh, she
Was happy as a child in a canoe
That floats along a flowery river-bank
Under the very bluest of June skies.
The more my care, then, to deserve her
trust.

The bay once more: Mother and Jane
and Phil
And all the others. I had bought a house
That stood beside the lighthouse on a
ledge
Commanding bay and sea alike. In front
It looked straight out against the sharp-
cut rim
Of the horizon; from the beach behind,
The bay ran inland, widening to the left
Where the old village lay. How bright it
looked

The morning we moved in! I felt, you see,
I needed both—the ocean to inspire,
The bay to comfort; and for Seraphine,
Though steeped in quiet charm, she too had moods
Of mystery and of daring, for her soul
Had kinship with all beauty, wild or still.

Is married life a paradise? Well, no.
No life on earth is that for long, I think.
To live in paradise one needs a love
For something out of reach, be it a girl,
Or fame, or flawless virtue, or the gleam
Of fleeting truth and beauty; only eyes
That dwell on heaven may shun the ills of earth.
Find with imagination's telescope
Some far perfection for your paradise,
A planet dead these million million years!
The artist does not paint ideal beauty,
Though he adores it; no, if he is wise
He paints a lovely face, a charming scene,—

Good flesh and earth, but clad in purer
light.
'Tis so with woman; the "divine idea,"
"The eternal feminine" is a beacon-ray
To guide us mid the waves of blind desire;
But bring it home, it will not cheer your
hearth.
The stars were meant to steer by, not to
warm.
The simple truth then is that paradise
Is in the sky—and we must live on earth.

And yet how can I write so, looking
down
As from a hill across the blooming fields
We traversed? Do I now recall the
thorns
That scratched us in that galaxy of
flowers,
Far, far too thick for memory's eyes to
count,
That spreads unbroken back to the fair
day
When first my home was hers? 'Twas
well, I think,

We made our way through thorns and flowers alike,
Learning to know each other and ourselves.

My foreign wife had tact and natural grace,
Spoke English well, and in the true French way
Was pleased with little things; a touch, a glance,
A gay nasturtium vine, a song-sparrow's note,
The outline of an elm, the delicate tint
Of rosy clouds reflected liquidly—
On these she lived. You will not find it strange
Then that New England, only grim and bleak
To casual eyes, had many a subtle way
To recompense her for the loss of France.
Like land, like people. When my mother saw
How ever-thoughtful was the "foreign wife,"

She soon unbent. And as I had always hoped,
My wife and Jane were sisters from the start,
And never faltered, leaning each on each
And learning: Jane a wider view of life,
A cheerfuller code of duty; Seraphine
The true worth of our bay-folk, and a host
Of household details. What a joy it was
To feel their harmony! My brother Phil
Broke out in admiration undisguised
At all she said and did: the dress she wore,
So soft in hue, so simple in design,
That fell from throat to wrist so flowingly,
So full of ease from shoulder to the poise
Of her light instep; or her voice a-thrill
With child-like happiness—at the merest phrase
He'd start and turn in laughable surprise,
Just as a dog turns round when some one sings.

He worshipped Hilda with a high respect
That could not waver, but from time to time,
After our Sunday dinner as we sat
And smoked, he'd say, "I wonder why it is
That Hilda's dresses look so angular.
She hasn't got the knack, I guess." Again,
"I like to hear a voice go up and down;
It makes you so you don't get tired." Of course
I didn't need such little hints as these
To justify my choice, but still his words
Helped to support me in the firm belief
That bay-folks want a world outside their own,
When they divine it. As to that wise flock,
The village gossips, whom we had to meet,
They owned her manners were agreeable.

A hurried month was all that I could spare
To found our little home. The bitterest pang
I ever felt was leaving Seraphine

To make her way alone in the new land,
While I returned to win our daily bread
By bitter wrestling with the bitter sea.

Ringed by an amphitheatre of blue,
I fought my gladiator fights. The dome,
So splendid and so various with the glow
Of wonder-dreams and proud realities,
Had narrowed to a cell, for Nature's face
Was loveless as a woman's that forgets.
While I had served her as a queen, nor owned
Other allegiance, Lady Ocean smiled
With favor on her minion; but as soon
As I had formed a deeper, closer tie
With a young waiting-damsel of her court,
She paid my former service with disdain.
In youth beside the bay my hopes had flown
Far out to sea, but now upon the sea
My hopes were ever winging toward the bay.

I lived on letters. 'Twas a new delight
To see my bay pictured in those fond eyes

That looked upon me as I read, to drink
The scene I knew in the swift-welling words
That overflowed the lips of Seraphine.
For as she spoke she wrote, the very tones
Of each inflection quaintly Gallicized,
The little trips in grammar like the steps
Of girls that dance among the swaying grass
For mere delight, forgetting all the rules
Of indoor dancing-school—each grace, each fault
(As purists might have said) came skipping in
Like round-a-rosy through the crowded page.
So I lived on a whole long year, the while
I could but peep into the enshrining bay,
Twice precious with its jewel.
When at last
My furlough came again, I found that all
Had not gone well. Poor little Seraphine!
The bay-folk had no gentleness, no love
Of beauty, not a thought beyond themselves

And their small neighborhood, no sympathy
Even for what they saw; their round of life
Knew not a gleam of joy. Yes, Jane was kind,
But oh so practical! so much she found
To do, so little time she left for play.
"She made me buy some chickens" (this, it seemed,
Had been a crucial point), "and they get out
And spoil my flowers." I had to smile at that,
Thinking of Jane's New England thriftiness,
And Seraphine so anxious to do right
And save for me, yet feeling in her heart
A desperate anger at the silly fowls
That scratched among her dahlias.
Then, poor Phil,
Trying to cheer my lonely wife, had roused
In Hilda's breast an imp of jealousy,
Who, half ashamed to show his ugly head,

Made trouble none the less. Hilda had
marked
A charm, a sympathy in Seraphine
She could not understand. (She told me
this
Herself in better days.) She saw that Phil
Responded, for he did most guilelessly.
She could not see then that this charm was
but
The happy radiance of a happy soul.—
Well, I've forgiven her now, but many a
time
It maddened me to watch how Hilda froze
Each little harmless burst of merriment,
Much as a grim bright day of early March
Might chill a shrinking snow-drop.
Mother too,
When told, kept on repeating helplessly:
"She doesn't like our ways; I ain't sur-
prised."
I wasn't either. Well, but—what to do?

"There's no one I can sing to when you
go,"

Sighed Seraphine one evening. There I took
The cue: why shouldn't she give lessons here?
We tried, and soon found pupils of the best:
Squire Ogden's niece, and Doctor Wellman's wife,
And Nora Gray, who'd been to school in town.
They liked our cosy house, admired the view
And Brinton's picture, our best wedding gift;
But most of all they took to Seraphine,
Invited her to tea, or both of us
To dinner, where we saw a different set
That talked of other things than cows and crops
And neighbors' ailments. Then my mother's friends
Began to hint we thought ourselves too good
For their society; but it was not so,

'Twas but that Seraphine had felt the call
Of like to like.

I went off more at ease
About our future, still my mind was fixed
That somehow I had got to find a way
To live at home. You see, before I left,
My wife had whispered something in the dark—
Just an idea, a hope, and after that
I couldn't bear to think, if children came,
That Seraphine must be there all alone,
And they grow up scarce knowing me by sight;
It would be wicked, that was how I felt.
When a determination takes deep root,
It mostly grows, unless the soil is bad.
From a small boy, I'd always had a craze
For lighthouses, and so in foreign lands
I'd noticed where they were built, and how and why,
And talked about them. Now I gathered up
All I could find and wrote a sort of book,
Telling the risks and dangers of the life,

And showing how along the New England coast
Things might be better. What should come of this
But I was sent for down at Washington
To talk to a committee? After that
I took six months to study up a bit,
Passed an examination and became—
Lighthouse Inspector, which I have been by now
These twenty years. I got a route near home
So I could live there nearly all the time,
Making my rounds and writing my reports.

Some years it took to see the whole thing through,
And in the first our daughter Jane was born,
While I was on the ocean. What a jump
I gave when I got the news! I pinched myself,
Sat down, stood up, grinned like a fool no doubt;—

It seemed so unaccountable to think
That I was a father. But in ten days more
I held her in my arms, the odd pink mite
That was to be a woman, if God willed,
And live her life, have children in her turn,
A link in the great chain. Most wonderful
And solemn! When I knelt beside the crib
And prayed, 'twas hardly more in gratitude
Than to ask help and strength for what should come.—
In all the greatest moments of our life
It's not the present that concerns us most,
But what's to follow. That's the way with birth,
With marriage and with work. Why not with death?
Is that to be the only great event
That points no farther, a sheer precipice
Where all our hopes dash down and disappear?
I can't believe it.—How my mind runs off
To sudden thoughts like these! They come themselves,

As I get older, when I walk alone,—
Often refreshing, always comforting;
Which makes me think they're wafted to our hearts
By grace divine from some far lands of truth.

Never had I so worshipped Seraphine
As then I did, sharing her deeper joy
In our great blessing. What a softened light
Haloed her resting head! her eyes how deep!
Her grace how like an angel's! as she lay
And with a weak but never-weary arm
Pillowed the little one.—The world is bad,
The world is harsh, but never was the time
That men could look unmoved at such a scene.
What holier sign to keep our nature pure
Than such a picture? Are we in the right,
We Protestants, to keep it out of church?

We've sailed on steadily from that fair time,

My little wife and I. More children came:
A boy, a girl, and last, another boy.
Our house is larger and our hearts as well,
I hope, though none of our new friends can fill
The place that Brinton held. Of all the shocks
That broke our quiet progress none has struck
So hard as did the news that he'd gone down
Alone and far away. A gallant soul!
True to his kind, to Nature and to God.
Without his help I never could have been
The half of my best self, 'twas he that found
What no one knew was there, I least of all.
Sometimes I've stood off to admire the job
That Brinton made of me, for 'twas his word
That drove me forth to seek a larger world,

And seeking find myself; his wisdom showed
My faults and made me strive to weed them out,
And bring to fruit the hidden seeds of good.
I'm glad I never can be satisfied
With settling back, I'm thankful that my boys
Will have a better start than I could get,
I'm glad that in a life of steady work
There has been time for beauty, room for joy,
And tolerance, too, for men of other moulds.
All this is Atwood Brinton, he himself,
Not Alden Carr at all, as any one
Can see. His vital spirit in my veins
Is pulsing ever, and that's why perhaps
I love him better while I miss him less.

Work that is cheery as the morning breeze,
Rest that is tranquil as the evening sky,
A wife he loves, and children growing up

Around them, time for nature and for friends;
These and the sense of something yet unknown—
A world of thought he can but half divine,
A realm of beauty he but dimly sees—
All these must blend, I think, to make the life
That brings one nearest to the heart of things.
A man who toils with blind, impatient strength
Will waste himself, and one who only dreams
Will feel his sinews fail in time of stress.
I haven't done much, and I haven't been,
Heaven knows, half equal to my happiness:
But what I've done, I've done from aiming high
And getting strength in rest and solitude;
And what I've been, I've been through honest work
To make my dreams come true. That's why I say:

Blest is the man who can both do and be.

From thirty-five one's course don't alter much.
Landmarks there were. Twice we went back to France
To visit the old doctor,—hearty still,
He writes us, though he has not ventured yet
To cross in turn and see us in our home.
And Mother died. Our greatest grief was then
That no true sorrow came. We scarce had known
A word of love to leave her querulous lips.
Life had been hard for her, she had done her best,
But always grudgingly; our gratitude
We paid with lavish words—but not a tear.
She had not looked above the vexing swarms
Of household troubles, even toward the end,

When Phil and I had made things easy. No,
She had not planted love and might not reap.

The children grew and thrived and went to school
As other children do. No one would care
To read the record of their words and deeds,—
Their grand achievements, their unequalled wit!—
Which, like tradition, Seraphine and I
Still hold in our remembrance, to be lost
No doubt as all such records needs must be.
And yet these Lesser Iliads that are sung
Each day by baby lips to loving hearts,
These epics of the Isle of Lilliput,—
How often has their murmur soothed our cares
With soft Æolian lisp? Their gleams of joy
And fairy fancy, little flowers of trust,
The freely-pouring stream of love for all,

And the strange vision of our purest hopes
Flitting like butterflies in childish forms—
What fabled realm of heroes or of saints
Has raised us more above our baser selves
Than childhood's land of truth and innocence?

My work? At first my way was sharp and strict,
A cold, relentless hunting out of faults.
But soon I learned to take things differently:
To test the very nature of a man,
His pride and sense of duty; these assured,
To overlook a trivial slip or two.
A lighthouse man who never once forgets
That lives depend upon a fog-horn's blast,
And ships upon the timing of a flash,—
He is the man I look for. Now I search
An eye more keenly than a term report.
Result, I'm better liked and more obeyed.

But, when all's said, there's really not much chance

To be one's self in work, where all men don
Their uniforms of office and are merged
Into the solid army of their kind;
The truer moments come when each is free
To follow his own path. And this is mine:
To live a man where once I lived a boy,
Beside the bay, and yet with eager soul
To taste the sea's wild tang. I love my wife
No less because, with all her hearthside calm,
She has not lost through age and sordid cares
The spice of foreign sweetness, like a breath
Of the south wind that creeps on sultry days
Across the morning blueness of the sea,
Breaking the placid mirror into smiles
Innumerable.—How often do I stand
Out on the cliff there by the lighthouse tower
To see and feel and breathe it! Oh I've tried

A dozen times to keep the thoughts that
come,
But there's a mingling feel of fresh and
smooth
I've never caught. My best was only this:

A Sea Wind from the South

I

In the noontide heat the gray cliffs tremble,
Unsure of shape;
Their bulks an anchored fleet resemble,
Ranged cape on cape.
The still wave glints with steely tints,
Yon sail hangs slack,
While the smoke climbs high to a dazzling
sky
From a steamer's stack.

. . . . . .

But now my glance
Perceives across that shining broad ex-
panse
A quickening breath

That breaks the languorous reign of mid-
day death.

For the dusk of the south wind's promise
Creeps landward steadily.
I can feel beforehand the well-known touch
Of its magic sympathy;
Sweet from the smile of the indolent
south,
Cool with the balm of the sea—
Strong from the rays of the passionate
south,
Clean with the salt of the sea.

II

It comes, and the lazy smoke of the
steamer
Is wafted back;
It fills the sail and flutters the streamer
Of the fishing-smack.
More near, more near! At last 'tis here,
Like a longed-for bride,
The sense it enfolds and the heart it holds
In its rushing tide.

. . . . . .

E'en so each day
The wind of love breathes in upon my bay,
Steady and sure,
As gentle as the south wind and as pure.

For the low light voice of a woman
And the touch of her hands to me
Have the nearness and the remoteness
Of the wind with its mystery;
Rich as the glow of the opulent south,
Fresh as the virgin sea—
Vague with the charm of the dreamy south,
Soft with the kiss of the sea.

One's later life is less a broken surge
Of acts that foam and follow each on each
Than a wide calm of being. Time glides on
Above us like a tranquil afternoon
With shifting lights and shadows, but on us
The colors flow together as the greens
And purples just beyond the outer bar.

'Tis well, for mid the fretful waves of youth,
Through which we are tossed from hour to restless hour,
We lose all thought of things that do not change:
Of truth and beauty, of the soul and God.
Fighting amid the breakers we forget
That there above the storm the sky is blue.
But now the soul, sense-weary, passion-freed,
Seeks like a thirsty child the Well of Life,—
Love, the divine, the all-pervading Soul
That dwells in man and Nature, and that speaks
To mortal hearts in symbols: With a flower,
To show us how the tiniest form reflects
The perfect whole of beauty; with a star,
A sunset on the sea, to thrill us deep
With joy, with splendid sadness and with awe.
But more than these the willing sacrifice
Of man for men uplifts us, till at last

We half attain to see that holier Love
Nailed to the Cross, forgiving them that slay.

There's few things harder than to note the wrongs
Of earth and feel how powerless are we,
Save now and then a hero or a saint,
To right them. When a man in his own strength
Attempts it, can we wonder if he ends
In desperation? Most of us, it seems,
Can do no more than trust, and say our prayers,
And do our daily tasks. No human back
Can bear the weight of the world's misery.
We stumble even with the smallest loads,
Trying to act an honest, useful part
On a town council or a parish board.
It's queer a man can hardly do just right
One single hour. Another thing that's hard
Is choosing between duties: town or sons,
Wife or profession? But as years roll on,

I've come to spend my extra hours at home,
Where I'm best known, most loved, can do most good.
And if I'm happiest there—well, joy's no sin.

Jane's twenty-two now, with her mother's grace
And love for music; Brinton's coming on
At school—he'll go to Harvard in good time,
I hope—; and then there's Margery and Phil:
A good full nest of us! When supper's done,
Before the hour for lessons we all join
In music. First the children take their turns,
And lastly mother sings her simplest songs,
The wistful little peasant songs of France
That no one ever tires of. Aunty Jane
Has mostly happened in by then. She's stayed

Unmarried,—rather proud of it, I think;
She's had a-many chances to be sure.
The children go to lessons, and we three
Settle back cosily before the fire
To talk things over. When the clock strikes eight,
I see Jane home to Phil's house—the big farm
He bought last year—and stroll a bit to watch
The moonlight on the ocean's heaving breast,
Or on the other side the steady lamps
That glow upon the black unrippling bay.

I drop more often into scribbling verse
These days, especially in the summer time
When I've a rest between inspection trips.
I sit here on the porch and look, and look
Across the bay, until my prisoned thoughts
Escape into the æther, and there comes
A sense of kinship with the things I see,
As Nature draws me closer to her breast,
Whispering me of things I cannot tell
Even to Seraphine. You know those days

In August when the faint-winged breeze
holds off
Till afternoon? I tried once to infuse
The breath of that elusive breathlessness
Into a song called "Noontide Ecstasy."

Noontide Ecstasy

White sails, white sails, o'er the bay that
shimmer,
Softly enfolded in warm noon light,
Your vague reflection, growing ever dim-
mer,
Lures across the ripples my spell-bound
sight.

White clouds, white clouds, poised in lofty
station,
Purer, subtler is the charm you wear;
Far though you be, my fond imagination
Breathes the enchantment of your
dream-heights rare.

White thoughts, white thoughts, o'er the
world that hover,

Vision that melts in bright far blue,
Fair as the form of maiden to her lover,
Draw with tranquil beauty my longing
soul to you.

I'm not a poet, but I somehow think
There's poetry in the soul of every man,
If only he knew how to get it out.
It stands to reason people feel alike,
And every one is happier when he finds
The thoughts he loved but hardly dared to trust
Set boldly on the page. To write one's best,
Besides, is more than half to be one's best.
Something I wrote once, when the heavens were clear
And every mote of star-dust shone distinct
Along the purple highroad of the night,
That gave me pleasure. 'Twas a curious thought,
But, as it seemed, a true thought none the less.

Starlight Meditation

Fair are the stars! yon scattered silvery swarm
Caught in the wide untrembling web of night,
That through the pearly dimness faint and warm
Shed upon wave and shore their effluence bright.

Fair are the lights! whatever each may be:
Gay colored motes that back and forward roam,
Or dull ship-lanterns burning fixedly,
White street lights and the yellow lamps of home.

Nature and modern man have wrought the scene.
We think their ways discordant. Wherefore so?
Is the stars' radiance, pallid and serene,

Marred by the mirrored lamplight's
bolder glow?

Nay, for they blend to form a perfect
whole,
A unity of beauty in the soul.

But here I'm maundering, maundering,
with no more
To tell, and very little else to say.
These last few words shall finish.—I have
lost
My strong New England accent, what with
books,
Talking with Seraphine, and seeing much
Of outside folks; but always at the heart
I'm loyal to my breeding. Brinton said
No country was as beautiful as this,
Which makes me bold to say it after him.
I love it in the large and in the small:
The broad, low-outlined hills; the bay,
a-swim
With purest color, every island shape
Of gauntness half concealed by straggling
pines.

I love each separate curve of sandy shore,
Each grove and simple farmhouse, every field
And wall and bush and stone and blade of grass.
Early remembrance now has grown more sweet
From walks with Seraphine, whose thoughtful eyes
Look so much deeper into all they see.
I love the cliffs, battered and torn and cleft,
But rising from the ocean with stern joy,
As still they fling the spent and shattered waves
Back from the foaming rampart. And I love
The gullies where the stalwart blackfish hide;
No fun more keen than casting through the surf
And reeling in the big ones, while the spray
Strums with rude fingers on the tautened line—

(I've a queer picture by a Japanese
That shows a great wave rearing up and up
Just like a dragon with his claws outspread.)
Then the clean beaches with their speckled sand,
Their moist round pebbles and the fluttering strips
Of quaintly ruffled sea-weed!
Ah, the folks
That come in June admire the things they see,
But they've not known the splendor of the fall,
And the bleak winter gales that sift the soul
And nerve the heart like danger—those are days
That make us glad of springtime when it comes.
Such is New England, such the little bay
For which I've left the wide and stormy world.
But still within my being runs the throb

Of memories beating from that larger life
Like breakers from the ocean—how they stir
With unforgotten joys of former years!
All the more cosy is my sheltered bay
When the vast surge is roaring. Thus I live
Half in the present, half in memory's world;
So that at last within me bay and sea,
My peaceful boyhood and my stormy prime,
Unite their warring natures and are one.

ENVOI

'Tis autumn, and my reminiscent dreams
Have drifted down the late September sky.
The towering billows of the equinox
Have burst and foamed and sunk, till now
the sea
Is quiet and the air is sharp and clear.
'Tis time then you and I should say fare-
well
And follow each his fortunes as before,
Eddying amid the whirl of things we call
Reality.
So, each apart, we sail
From out our little bay of poetry
(Which, although bare and narrow, yet
was home)
Into the strange bewildering sea of fact
That trebly tests our moral seamanship,
Sweeping us from the sheltering port of
faith

And threatening still to swallow up the soul.

Suppose, too, that the whole of life on earth
Is but a bay from which we must put forth
Into the ocean of eternity.—
The thought is lonely. May we never hope
That from yon wide, inhospitable void
We shall win back into the life we knew,
Shall find once more the bay of human love,—
Blest with diviner beauty, but the same
To our transfigured hearts?—It hardly seems
That Heaven could be Heaven unless 'twere so.

FINIS

PS
3537
.T716
S4
1916

10.00

Stork, C. W.
Sea and bay

PS
3537
.T716
S4
1916

70993

THE LIBRARY
JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY
JACKSONVILLE 11, FLORIDA